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ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

CHESTER COUNTY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,

AT THEIR FIRST ANNUAL EXHIBITION, IN THE BOROUGH OF
WEST CHESTER, SEPT. 11, 1846.

BY WILLIAM DARLINGTON, M. D.

Des que l'homme eut soumis les champs a la culture,
D'un heureux coin de terre il soigna la parure;
Et plus pres de ses yeux il rangea sous ses lois
Des arbres favoris et des fleurs de son choix.

Les Jardins. chant. 1.



WEST CHESTER, PENN'A,

.....
1846.

WEST CHESTER, *September 14, 1846.*

DEAR SIR :

At a meeting of the Committee of Arrangement of the Chester county Horticultural Society, held September 12th inst., it was on motion,

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Committee be tendered to Dr. William Darlington for the able and interesting address delivered by him at the Horticultural Exhibition on the 11th inst., and that a committee be appointed to solicit a copy for publication." Whereupon, the undersigned were appointed said committee.

In communicating to you the foregoing resolution, allow us to hope that you will furnish us with a copy of the address alluded to, which afforded so much gratification to all who heard it, and which, we indulge the anticipation, will be of no small benefit in diffusing more extensively through the community a taste for the pleasures of Horticulture. With much respect, we remain yours, &c.,

WASHINGTON TOWNSEND,
B. FRANKLIN PYLE,
JOHN RUTTER,
WM. M'CULLOUGH,
DAVIS GARRETT, jr.

DR. WM. DARLINGTON.

WEST CHESTER, *September 15, 1846.*

GENTLEMEN:

Your favor of yesterday's date is just received. The *Address* referred to—belonging as it does to the occasion—is, of course, at the disposal of the Committee; and while I could have wished it more worthy of the honor intended, I shall nevertheless be gratified if the publication may in any way, or in the slightest degree, promote the laudable objects of the Society.

Very respectfully,

WM. DARLINGTON.

MESSES. WASHINGTON TOWNSEND,
B. FRANKLIN PYLE,
JOHN RUTTER,
WM. M'CULLOUGH,
DAVIS GARRETT, jr.

ADDRESS, &c.

*Mr. President: Ladies and Gentlemen
of the Chester County Horticultural Society:*

THE Committee appointed to procure a competent person to address you, on this occasion, have, as you perceive, been rather unsuccessful in their efforts. It was their wish, and intention, to provide a Discourse worthy of the subject in which you take so lively an interest: but failing in that, they have to solicit your indulgence for the hasty *substitute* now about to be offered. The duty of preparing that substitute, having been unexpectedly, and at a late hour, assigned to me,—I should certainly have shrunk from the task, had I not felt that it would seem most ungracious, in a professed admirer of Plants, to refuse a co-operation, in any capacity, with those who have associated expressly to promote the culture of favorite *Fruits* and *Flowers*. The *theme*, moreover, is a rich and prolific one; and he who cannot be in some degree inspired by the contemplation of its charms, must be

* * "duller than the fat weed
* * * on Lethe wharf."

I shall therefore venture to trespass on your good nature, by submitting a few desultory remarks which have occurred to me, in reference to the objects of this Society.

HORTICULTURE, in the comprehensive sense in which the term is now understood, is unquestionably one of the most elegant and refined—as it is one of the most inter-

esting—of earthly pursuits. It has for its especial objects, the production of the choicest fruits and vegetables—the training of the most ornamental trees and shrubbery—the culture of the sweetest and most beautiful flowers—and the arrangement of the whole in accordance with the principles of a refined, disciplined, unsophisticated taste. It involves, in short, all that is connected with comfort and beauty around our dwellings—all that can gratify the palate, delight the eye, or regale the most fastidious of the senses. As an *enlightened Agriculture* indicates a superior stage of civilization, in the march of human society—blending, as it does, scientific illustration with every utilitarian process,—so a *perfect Horticulture* may be regarded as the crowning attainment of an intellectual and polished people. To borrow a simile from one of the noblest of the Arts,—the employments of Man, in the successive stages of his advancement, may be compared to the principal Orders of ancient Architecture. In the savage or *hunter* state, we find the rude unpolished strength of the *Tuscan* Order. The same rude vigor, with the higher finish and symmetry of the *Doric*, is seen in the *pastoral* stage. The combined strength, stateliness, and graceful tournure, of the *Ionic* Order, may be considered as the type of the enlightened *Agricultural* stage: while the elegant science of *Horticulture*—the employment and the recreation of Man in his most elevated condition—may be regarded as the finishing accomplishment of Society—the *Corinthian* Order of human attainments and pursuits. Dedicated to the culture and improvement of the choicest productions of the vegetable creation, it is a pursuit which requires the united qualifications of practical dexterity and scientific skill—with a correct perception of the appropriate and beautiful: And while it thus exacts, and promotes, the highest mental accomplishments, it at the same time represses the more sordid or grovelling passions, and cherishes the

purser aspirations of the human heart. What can be more propitious to elevation of thought, or more congenial with purity of mind—when rightly considered—than the varied attractions of an elegant Garden? It is the place of all others—of a temporal character—best fitted to refine the feelings, and sublimate the affections. *A Garden* was the spot, selected by Divine Wisdom, as the appropriate residence of man, while in the state of primeval innocence: and if ever, on this earth, Man should so far improve as to qualify himself for a *Paradise regained*, we may fairly infer that the scene of his terrestrial bliss will, again, be a perfect and beautiful *Garden*.

That the habitual association with interesting plants and flowers exerts a salutary influence on the human character, is a truth universally felt and understood. No one ever dreams of any possibility of mistake, in estimating the disposition of those who delight in gardens, rural walks and arbours, and the culture of elegant shade trees and shrubbery. Who ever anticipated boorish rudeness, or met with incivility, among the enthusiastic votaries of *Flora*? Was it ever known, that a rural residence, tastefully planned, and appropriately adorned with floral beauties, was not the abode of refinement and intelligence? Even the scanty display of blossoms in a window—or the careful training of a honey suckle, round a cottage door—is an unmistakeable evidence of gentle spirits, and an improved humanity, within. There *may*, possibly, be natures so gross, as to be incapable of perceiving the beauties of the Vegetable Creation—and altogether inaccessible to the influences of genuine taste,—as it is *said*, there are persons insensible to the charms of the sweetest music: But I can only imagine the existence of such unfinished specimens of our kind, as the rare *exceptions*, which logicians say are the strongest proofs of the *general rule*. They must, indeed, be the *veriest clods* that ever fell, *from auld Nature's*

'prentice han'. SHAKSPEARE, as you know, tells us—

“The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.”

Now, if *such* be the character of the man who is so unfortunate, in relation to the pleasures of a *single sense*,—what shall we say of him who cannot appreciate the delights of a rich and beauteous *Garden*? delights, which appeal so directly to *each* of the senses—and minister so exquisitely to *all the five*! I should say, he was not fit even for “*spoils*,”—which, I believe, is the lowest qualification recognized at the present day: and I would heartily concur in the judgment, pronounced by the bard:—

“*Let no such man be trusted.*”

Such, then, being the nature—the influences and the tendencies—of *Horticulture*, in the comprehensive and just acceptation of the term,—it is an occasion of sincere congratulation, to see the citizens of this ancient county awakening to a perception of its benefits, and associating to promote its advancement. Having, by their skill and industry, made the *Agriculture of Chester* the admiration of all observers,—it next becomes an urgent duty to make their Gardens, their Orchards, and the Lawns appertenant to their dwellings, correspond with the beauty and excellence of their farms. The time, indeed, has fully arrived, when such a movement is due to our character, as a community: for candor will oblige us to confess, that, while our *farming* has been managed with commendable skill and neatness—we have been sadly neglectful of our *Horticulture*—that elegant department of the Profession, which is the crowning attainment of an accomplished agricultural people. The true Science of Gardening does not come by intuition; but is to be acquired by a rational and studious attention to the operation of established laws. The art of increasing the size, and improving the quality, of vegetable products—to be

completely successful—demands a close observation of natural phenomena, and an intimate acquaintance with the physiology of plants. The influence of *culture* and *soil*, upon vegetable development, is a most interesting problem—which has not yet been thoroughly solved, and is generally, in fact, but little understood.

Those plants which have been long under cultivation, are continually undergoing modifications in their tissues—and producing variations of form, dimensions, texture, color, or flavor. This phenomenon is especially remarkable in some old favorites, which have been carefully nursed for ages;—such as the *Rose* and the *Tulip*, among flowers,—and the *Pear*, the *Apple*, and the *Peach*, among fruits: and it is by watching this process in the vegetable economy—by a skillful selection and management of the *best varieties*, thus produced,—that the apparently accidental features and qualities are *fixed*, or become permanent;—establishing what are called *races*, in the language of Botany. It is in this way, that the countless sorts of our choice fruits and vegetables have been obtained.—They are all mere progressive developments, or modifications, of a few wild unpalatable *originals*, which have been gradually tempered and ameliorated by the influences of a kindly nourishing soil, a propitious situation, and a continued skillful treatment. The sagacious Gardener avails himself of those occasional developments,—and by a careful culture, perpetuates beautiful forms, or valuable qualities, which otherwise would be as transient as the individual specimens in which they occur.

If an excellent variety happen in a woody perennial—such as a *fruit tree*,—the original *tree*—and of course the identical sort of *fruit*—may be multiplied indefinitely, by the process of *budding*, or *ingrafting*. If it occur in a herbaceous or annual plant, it may often be perpetuated, as a distinct sort, or *race*, by a proper attention to the culture, and a careful selection of the fairest seeds for

planting. This truth is constantly exemplified, in the preservation of distinct varieties, or races, of cultivated *grains* (such as *bearded* and *beardless wheat*—white wheat—red-chaff, &c.), and also in numerous *garden vegetables*,—in which the peculiarities are fixed, and transmissible to future crops by the *seeds*. The character of the best varieties, yet known, may doubtless be still further improved, by the continued influence of appropriate management;—as is evinced by the specimens annually exhibited by the various horticultural societies.

That these important facts and principles have been but little heeded or considered, by a portion of our people, is too obvious to be denied. We are bound in honesty to admit, that while our Agricultural fellow citizens may justly pride themselves on the condition and products of their *fields*,—numbers of them have been utterly neglectful of their *Orchards* and *Gardens*; and have discovered no manner of taste in the arrangements around their dwellings. There are yet too many instances, in Chester County, of tolerably cultivated farms, on which there is scarcely any *other* visible evidence of improvement;—no horticulture—except a paltry, weedy, neglected kitchen garden; no well-selected Orchard of fruit trees; no green sward, nor clustering flowers, nor ornamental shrubbery, around the farm-house; not even a friendly shade-tree, to protect the dwelling from the glare of the summer's sun. Too often we may see the residence of a substantial farmer, naked and broiling, as it were, in one of his open tree-less fields,—without so much as a palisade to keep the stock at a respectful distance from his doors—the persecuted cattle contending hopelessly against a swarm of flies under the windows of his sitting-room, and crowding, as to a place of refuge, into the narrow shadow afforded, by the building itself;—while the unringed swine are either wallowing in the drain of the kitchen—or wantonly rooting up the footway at the very entrance to his domicile!

How repugnant is such a scene to every idea of refinement and comfort ! How offensive to every corporeal sense—as well as to every sense of moral fitness and propriety ! What can be expected from a family, raised under circumstances so unpropitious to the formation of a correct taste, or the cultivation of the finer feelings ? The children so brought up, may, indeed, be fitted to migrate from such a home—and be prepared to exchange it, without regret, for the rude accommodations of our wild frontiers : but they can have no conception of the sentiments inspired by lovely scenery around the paternal mansion. They can know nothing of the charms and abiding moral influences of a pleasant homestead, upon the susceptible minds of the young. Their early years being thus destitute, they will necessarily be strangers to those precious associations, by which memory renews the delights of a happy childhood—and links the dreamy enjoyments of youth with the sober realities of after life. But, at the present day, there is really no excuse for any such culpable improvidence—such boorish negligence of all that can adorn a country residence, or afford the comforts of a rural home.

There is no necessity, in this climate and country, for any family to be destitute of the luxuries derived from the Garden and the Orchard ; and consequently, no apology can be offered for those sluggards, who neglect to plant for themselves,—and yet, in the season of fruits, have the assurance recklessly to trespass upon their more provident neighbors. Such persons do not merely violate good manners, by their rudeness : they train up those about them with exceedingly loose notions of moral honesty. It is high time there was a reformation wrought among such people : and I firmly believe there can be no agency devised, so efficacious in promoting that reform, as Institutions of the kind which I have now the honor to address. They propose, by a general co-operat-

tion, to make the culture of vegetable delicacies so universal, and so productive, that there shall be neither pretext nor motive for the plundering of Orchards and Gardens. They demonstrate the practicability of their generous purpose, by the most encouraging *examples*;—and good examples, happily, are sometimes *contagious*, as well as those which are evil. We may, therefore, reasonably hope to see a decisive movement among our people, in reference to gardening, and the cultivation of choice fruit. I hold that every farmer, great and small, every occupant of soil, whether he reckon by acres, or by perches,—is bound to plant, and provide the products of the Orchard and Garden—in justice to his neighbors, as well as to his own family: and they can *all* perform that obvious duty, if they choose. There is nothing wanting to effect that desirable object, but the *will*; and a correct public sentiment would avail much in controlling and regulating the volitions of the inconsiderate. There is scarcely a house-holder in the community, who does not occupy a lot sufficient for a garden,—or who has not room for a few select fruit trees. It is a mere idle pretext, for any one to allege that he has no *space*, nor *leisure*, for their cultivation. I doubt whether there be a tenement in the land (there surely need not be), which has not ground enough annexed to admit, for example, a Peach tree, a May-duke cherry, an Apricot, a Pear tree, and a Grape vine. These are the fruits so universally and eagerly run after, in their season; and one or more of these popular favorites could certainly be accommodated about the humblest cottage in Chester county. It will never do, therefore, for those who can find time to rob the Orchards of their neighbors, to pretend that they have not leisure to plant a tree or two at their own doors.—Such unworthy practices, and dishonest subterfuges, should be promptly shamed, or frowned, out of existence.

I have thought I could already perceive, in our vicinity,

evidences of a growing disposition to cultivate both useful and ornamental trees and shrubbery. Unquestionably, as the exhibition before us abundantly demonstrates, there has been a decided advance in the production of choice garden vegetables,—and in the taste for cultivating rare and beautiful flowers. For this improvement, we have been chiefly indebted to the labors and example of the spirited pioneers, who prepared the way for the establishment of this Society. These public benefactors have presented us with new views of what may be done for a community, by an enlightened *Horticulture*: and were it not for the awkwardness of *personal* allusions, in the presence of the parties, I should be tempted to notice more explicitly, than I shall now venture to do, the commendable zeal of our worthy President,—and the exemplary efforts of a RUTTER and a RIVINUS—a TOWNSEND and a GARRETT—a HOOPES, a TAYLOR, a M'ILVAIN, a STEELE, a HARTMAN, a STRODE, an EMBREE, and a STROMBERG—with other valuable co-laborers in the noble cause.* Not satisfied with showing us, by their several examples, what can be done by individual enterprize in behalf of horticulture, they sought to concentrate the energies of its friends in a united effort for its advancement. They established this Institution,—and invited the co-operation of every one who feels an interest in its laudable objects. In this movement, too—as always when benefits are to be conferred upon our race—they have been happily sustained by the countenance and participation of the Gentler Sex.

With such purposes, and under such auspices, we cannot but anticipate the most satisfactory results. As already

* In any notice of the public-spirited few, who led the way in introducing an improved Horticulture among us, it would be inexcusable not to mention the laudable example of the Misses BENNETT, of this Borough—who were among the foremost in cultivating Vegetables of a superior quality, and showing how our market may be supplied with the choicest products of the Garden.

remarked, the agency of the Society, in extending information, and awakening a perception of the beautiful, cannot fail to be salutary : for the example of a pure taste has an irresistible influence upon all minds which are not utterly insensible to the beauties of Nature and Art.

As the classic *Portico* which adorns our village, will be a sure guarantee against the erection of any uncouth pile in its vicinity,—so will the display of true taste, and the exhibition of practical skill, in *Horticulture*, necessarily influence all who have the slightest aptitude for improvement ; and will eventually banish from amongst us every vestige of barbarism, in the decoration of our grounds and the management of our gardens.

The great charm of the scenery, so universally felt by those who visit our mother country, consists in the high state of its Agriculture, and the admirable fitness, and symmetry, in the arrangements of the gardens, and of the lawns, trees, and shrubbery, around the dwellings. These are every way worthy of our studious attention—and present the purest models for our instruction, in the art of embellishing rural residences.

WASHINGTON IRVING—whose judgment in the premises will scarcely be questioned—remarks, that “the taste of the English in the cultivation of land, and in what is called Landscape Gardening, is unrivalled. They have studied nature intently, and discovered an exquisite sense of her beautiful forms and harmonious combinations.—Those charms which in other countries she lavishes in wild solitudes, are here assembled around the haunts of domestic life. They seem to have caught her coy and furtive graces, and spread them like witchery about their rural abodes.”

Why should not *we*, also, commence the capture and domestication of those “coy and furtive graces,” which a bountiful Nature—or rather, a beneficent Providence—has lavished upon our own country,—and which haunt

every Glen, and Valley, and Hill-side, and Mountain top, throughout our favored land?

To aid us in this enterprise, we have the elegant and instructive works of LONDON, upon the art as practised in the old world,—and of our accomplished countryman, DOWNING, upon the theory and practice of *Landscape Gardening*, adapted to North America. By the gentleman last named, we have been supplied with a scientific treatise upon the *Fruits and Fruit-trees* of our country—as well as with instruction in the best modes of laying out and adorning our grounds: and he is, moreover, at this time, publishing a highly interesting monthly Magazine, intitled “*THE HORTICULTURIST, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste.*”^{*} Conducted by such guides—and profiting by the sagacious experience of all nations,—if we are docile, attentive, and persevering, we can scarcely fail to accomplish the objects of our Association. We may hope to be efficiently instrumental in arousing the public mind, throughout our ancient bailiwick, to a just sense of the importance and value of a perfect Horticulture. A French king, we are told, acquired some celebrity by uttering the benevolent wish, that he could supply a chicken to the dinner-pot of each of his subjects. That was a mere ebullition of kind feeling, on the part of Royalty,—and really added nothing to the meagre dinners of the French people: But the operations and tendencies of *Societies such as ours*, are calculated to effect something more than mere good wishes. An improved Horticulture will not only fill the dinner-pots with all sorts of nutritious esculents—but it

^{*}To instruct us in the management of the Flower and Kitchen Garden, we have “*The American Gardener's Calendar*,” by the late BERNARD M' MAHON—one of the pioneers, among us, in the good work of teaching Horticulture. Although his book was published forty years ago, it is, in my opinion, about as well adapted to our wants—and as replete with good practical common sense—as any thing of the kind which has yet appeared in our country.

will load the tables, of all who attend to its teachings, with every variety of delightful fruits. The Majesty of France indulged in a vain aspiration: but *we* look to substantial benefits—and to the certain means of conferring them.

By well-directed efforts, we may also be the means of causing those beautiful visions to be yet realized, which were long since entertained, in *Chester county*, by a few choice spirits within her borders. At an early day—when the perceptive faculties of the masses were unimproved by Education, and blunted by the unavoidable drudgery of a rude Agriculture,—our County produced men whose taste and refinement were so far in advance of the times, that they actually dreamt of pleasure-grounds, and Botanic Gardens;—and consequently, those *strange conceits* were very imperfectly appreciated, by their contemporaries. A *Botanic Garden* was then considered as one of the practical vagaries of an eccentric mind—the embodiment of a monomania—instead of being prized as a nursery of taste, and an instrument of knowledge—a means by which the value of new discoveries, and the practicability of their culture, may be speedily and economically tested, for the information of all. Yet, even in the midst of that intellectual fog, there were *minds (and honored be their memory!)* whose radiance could illustrate the importance of such Institutions,—and whose energies could effect their introduction.

If I mistake not, the *second* Garden in this confederated Empire of Republics (the *first* being also in this State,) designed for the culture and distribution of rare and valuable plants, was established at Marshallton, in *Chester county*;—and HUMPHREY MARSHALL, its venerable founder, was the author of the *first* treatise upon our vegetable treasures, that was issued from the American Press. His example, in founding a Botanic Garden, was soon followed by another estimable citizen of the

county—the late amiable JOHN JACKSON, of London-grove. A *third* exemplification of rural taste and elegance, was furnished by the brothers, SAMUEL and JOSHUA PIERCE, of East Marlborough,—who, by their splendid collection of Evergreens, and other kindred embellishments, have made their farm one of the most delightful rural residences within this commonwealth.

What those worthy citizens accomplished, from the promptings of their own good taste—when there were few to appreciate, and none to co-operate—may surely be attempted by us,—now that the progress of refinement, all around us, not only invites to the performance, but reproves our delay in the undertaking.

Let us resolve, then, to persevere in the good work, until our beautiful Science shall have diffused its blessings over this entire community—and all its mysteries and manipulations shall be as familiarly understood, as are the simplest processes of Agriculture. Let the acquisition of skill, and a thoroughly disciplined taste, be our constant aim: for we may rely upon it, that fruitful gardens, and embellished farms, will as surely follow those attainments, as the brilliance of day results from the rising of an unclouded sun.

Let us endeavor to hasten the period, when our *County* shall be as eminent in Horticulture, as in the other departments of rural economy—and when our *Village* shall be known throughout the land, as a favorite seat of Science and Refinement,—equally distinguished for the intelligence and urbanity of its people—the number and excellence of its scholastic Institutions—the rich productiveness and the tasteful elegance of its Gardens.

Oct. 10. 1856.

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